

6 September 2024

195 Lambton Quay
Private Bag 18–901
Wellington 6160
New Zealand

Anna

T +64 4 439 8000
F +64 4 472 9596

fyi-request-27814-cf92588e@requests.fyi.org.nz

OIA 29572

Tēnā koe Anna

Thank you for your email of 25 July 2024 in which you request the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA):

- 1) Does the New Zealand government plan to consider negotiating with the Australian government to improve the conditions for New Zealand permanent residents to eliminate the current imbalance?*
- 2) Are there specific measures or strategies included in the recently adopted "Trans-Tasman Roadmap to 2035" aimed at addressing this issue? Will this matter be resolved in the near future?*
- 3) Has this issue been raised in the "Trans-Tasman Roadmap to 2035" and is there a timeline for resolving it, particularly as per point 18 of the Joint Statement: Australia-New Zealand Leaders' Meeting 2023, which mentioned the establishment of a joint working group to report by the end of June 2024 (Joint-Statement-ANZLM-2...)?*

On 22 August 2024, the timeframes for responding to your request were extended by an additional 20 working days due to the consultations necessary to make a decision on your request (section 15A(1)(b) of the OIA refers).

There has always been a strong movement of people between New Zealand and Australia. The Trans-Tasman Travel Arrangement (TTTA) is a cornerstone of this aspect of the relationship. It is not a binding treaty, and both countries recognise that the rights afforded to third country citizens is a matter of national sovereignty. In line with the principles of the TTTA, both countries implement relatively seamless visa granting processes and related access to services, for the other to an extent which is unlike any other international relationship that Australia or New Zealand has.

The situation for New Zealanders in Australia is an ongoing focus for the New Zealand Government. In recent years this has focused on the rights of New Zealand citizens. In July 2023, Australia and New Zealand committed to a new, direct pathway to citizenship for New Zealanders in Australia. These changes are the biggest step forward in this area for a generation and will improve the lives of many New Zealanders who choose to live in Australia. Over 180,000 New Zealand-born Australian residents are already Australian citizens. This pathway is open to most New Zealand citizens, including those who become citizens after holding permanent residency.

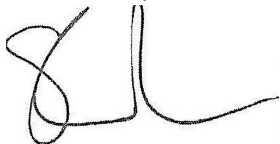
Ensuring that movement of people across the Tasman is as free as possible remains a priority for both sides. As you note, this is reflected in the Trans-Tasman Roadmap to 2035, which recognises that the free movement of citizens between our two countries under the TTTA is a foundation for our people-to-people links. As such, the Roadmap commits our Governments to continue to work together to provide fair and inclusive treatment of each other's citizens.

Regarding the 2023 Australia – New Zealand Leaders' Meeting Joint Statement reference to establishment of a working group, this was focused on initiatives to move closer towards seamless travel across the Tasman from a technical customs and border processes perspective. The working group was not focused on immigration policies.

Please note that it is our policy to proactively release our responses to official information requests where possible. Therefore, our response to your request (with your personal information removed) may be published on the Ministry website: www.mfat.govt.nz/en/about-us/contact-us/official-information-act-responses/

If you have any questions about this decision, you can contact us by email at: DM-ESD@mfat.govt.nz. You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision by contacting www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'SC', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Sarah Corbett
for Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Trade